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SYMPOSIUM ON ACQUISITIONS POLICY

On Thursday, 12 April 1956, a symposium on the "Acquisitions Policy of the National Medical Library" will be held at the Armed Forces Medical Library in Washington. The Symposium will begin at 9:30 a.m., and will run throughout the remainder of the day.

The program will be opened with a statement of the problem by the Director of the Library. The subject will then be discussed from the various viewpoints of general historiography, medical history, strategic intelligence, medical research, clinical medicine, and library technology. Participants in the discussion will be Dr. Arthur E. Bestor, Jr., (University of Illinois); Dr. Richard H. Shryock (Johns Hopkins University); Dr. Sherman Kent (CIA); Dr. Homer W. Smith (New York University); and Mr. Verner W. Clapp (Library of Congress). At the conclusion of the Symposium Mr. Keyes D. Metcalf (Rutgers University) will summarize the proceedings.

The Armed Forces Medical Library has long taken a keen interest in this area. Survey committees have made their recommendations; internal committees have developed policy statements, and the Library has prosecuted its acquisitions activity accordingly. But this is a problem which is likely to have no solution -- only solutions; a new look is needed from time to time. It is expected that this Symposium will furnish the basis for a new assessment of the Library's policies.

The Symposium is intended primarily for the benefit of the Armed Forces Medical Library staff, but interested persons from outside the Library will be welcome. Attendance must be regulated by cards of admission because the seating capacity of Library Hall is extremely limited. Application for such passes should be made to the Director, Armed Forces Medical Library, Washington 25, D. C.

LONDON MEETING

On 17, 18, and 19 November the Director was in London to attend a meeting of UNESCO's International Advisory Committee on Documentation and Terminology in Pure and Applied Science. Other members of the Committee present were Dr. D. J. Urquhart (United Kingdom), who acted as Chairman; Mr. J. E. Cummins (Australia); Dr. G. Funke (Sweden); Mr. J. de Laclemandiere (France); Dr. A. W. J. Mayer (Netherlands);

Printing cost borne by the FRIENDS of the Armed Forces Medical Library.

Lt. Col. C. L. Pasricha (India); Professor E. Pietsch (Germany); and Professor A. Scortecci (Italy). Dr. J. E. Holmstrom of the UNESCO Department of Natural Sciences served as Executive Secretary. There were a number of observers present, among whom were Dr. Willy Nagai (Japan); Dr. N. Howard-Jones (WHO); Mr. A. G. Orbaneja (FAO); Mr. G. A. Bull (World Meteorological Organization); and Dr. Mortimer Taube (United States). In the absence of Professor Ratip Berker (Turkey), Mr. Lorphevre (Belgium) served as liaison member from the International Advisory Committee on Bibliography. A delegation of observers from the U.S.S.R. was expected but did not attend.

A wide range of topics was discussed at the meeting, including use of patent literature, studies of user needs in the field of documentation, Dr. Holmstrom's forthcoming "Report on Scientific and Technical Translating and Related Problems", punched-card and other machine systems of information retrieval, and copyright problems. A working paper by M. Eric de Grolier, Professor at the Institut National des Techniques de la Documentation (Paris), entitled Les methodes applicables a la recherche rétrospective des documents scientifiques was discussed. The Committee recommended UNESCO support of a conference to be held in Washington in the latter part of 1957, the scope of which might be indicated by the substance of M. de Grolier's study.

DECEMBER EXHIBIT

This month's exhibit is entitled "Royal Physicians and their Patients." Material from antiquity relating to Antonius Musa, Andromachos the Elder and Oribasius, physicians to Augustus, Nero and Julian, respectively, is exhibited; the medieval and modern periods are represented by material relating to physicians to French kings from Charles VII to Louis XIV, and those of English sovereigns from William I through Charles II.

AFML CATALOG 1950-1954

Advance copies of the 1950-54 quinquennial cumulation of the AFML Catalog have been received at the Library. The subject volumes have been examined particularly with a view to determining what information, supplementary to that presented in the "Explanatory Notes" of volume one, might increase their usefulness.

The bibliographical record in the printed volumes is based on the standard catalog cards prepared primarily for use in the Library's card catalogs. The utilization of these cards for a printed author list presents no real problems; their use in a printed subject list, which is an integrated list requiring subject heading and cross reference apparatus, is quite a different matter.

1) The difference in the availability of information presented on a printed page and of the same information contained in the card catalog requires discrimination in treatment. In the case of the former, many entries can be seen at once, whereas the latter form restricts the user to one entry at a time. Therefore it becomes desirable, in using card catalog entries for a printed catalog, to delete some headings entirely and to combine others. Such deletions and combinations are especially frequent in subject subdivisions. Another element to be considered is the variation in the number of entries to be found in the card catalog and in any one edition of the Catalog. The smaller number in the printed list frequently results in a regrouping of entries.

2) Variations often occur between the forms of the subjects as traced on individual entries and the forms of subject headings used in the printed volume captions. This is due to the Library's continuing effort to improve subject headings by substituting better terms and by modernizing the form of headings. The process of simplification is a long and slow one, as evidenced by the individual card tracings included under BRAIN - INJURIES. Cards issued in 1950 have BRAIN - WOUNDS AND INJURIES, which on 1951 cards became BRAIN - WOUNDS & INJURIES, and on cards printed in 1954 is simply BRAIN - INJURIES. The effort to simplify and shorten headings by changing punctuation, by rewording, by eliminating words, and by substituting punctuation for words has been made in the belief that the changes will save the time and energy of those who make and those who use the catalogs.

3) Efforts have been made to include in the subject volumes necessary see and see also cross references and to exclude all others. The judgment of which were necessary was based on the whole subject list, rather than on individual subjects. For instance, the term NEOPLASMS has been used, since 1952, for the headings CANCER and TUMORS, which formerly had been used as subjects as well as subject subdivisions. The printed catalog shows the change in the main subject form because it contains the cross reference CANCER see NEOPLASMS, and TUMORS see NEOPLASMS. But specific reference from these two terms as subject subdivisions has been omitted; a person looking for ABDOMEN - CANCER will not find a reference to direct him to the correct heading, which is ABDOMEN - NEOPLASMS.

Another type of cross reference which has been omitted is the so-called general reference. DRUGS see also names of drugs and groups of drugs; e.g., ANTIBIOTICS; BIOLOGICAL PRODUCTS; NARCOTICS; QUININE is an example of a general reference.

The Armed Forces Medical Library Catalog (1950-54) contains almost 110,000 author and 80,000 subject entries. It is available this month from the publisher, J. W. Edwards, Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan, at $64 for the six-volume set.

STATISTICAL SUMMARY, FISCAL YEAR 1955

During the year ended 30 June 1955, the Armed Forces Medical Library:

ACQUIRED 14,018 books, 77,089 serial pieces, and 1,182 new serial titles.

PURCHASED 297 old and rare items for the History of Medicine Division.

CATALOGED 19,446 titles, of which 6,277 were recataloged works.

WITHDREW 2,423 duplicate and out-of-scope items from the collection.

BOUND 13,611 volumes.

ADDED 928 pictures and portraits to the Art Collection.

PREPARED 17,985 main entries for the 1954 segment of the quinquennial (1950-54) cumulation of the AFML Catalog.

CIRCULATED 168,125 volumes.

ANSWERED 10,310 reference questions and compiled 405 bibliographies of some length.

FILMED 1,640,732 pages in response to 101,257 photoduplication orders.

PUBLISHED 102,645 items in the Current List, from 1,560 journal titles being indexed.

SENT to the printer the final 26,509 cards for incorporation in the last regular volume of the Index-Catalogue, and saw all copy for the volume in page proof.

SPENT $1,200,956 for all operations.

EMPLOYED an average work force of 216 persons.

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